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handedness, he presents arguments in favor of the indirect influence of the position of the organs of the body in connection with the forms of activity which were demanded by the environment of primitive man.

The discussion adds little if anything to our knowledge of the subject, but it does forcibly call attention to the danger, in genetic studies, of mistaking the result of a phenomenon for one of its conditions.

The results of right-handedness are discussed under three heads in the second part of the book: (1) Indications of the influences of right-handedness on the brain; (2) writing as a cause of the unilateral position of the speech center; (3) possible disadvantages of the more limited use of a hemisphere.

In view of the commonly accepted facts there can be little doubt that structural asymmetry in connection with certain environmental demands for motor adjustments has brought about the condition of right-handedness; and this in turn has conditioned important structural changes in the organism. Structural asymmetry is both a cause and a result of right-handedness. Both structure and motor adjustment have played a part in the establishment of a preference for one hand rather than the other.

A chronologically arranged bibliography of the subject, which should be of value to any who wish to get a thorough knowledge of the literature, is appended to the work.

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La durée des sensations visuelles élémentaires. PIERRE JANET. *Bulletin de l'Institut Général Psychologique.* 1904.

In connection with his well-known studies of obsessions, phobias and other forms of mental depression or loss of mental force, the author has long sought for some symptom that, more than the more general symptoms such as aboulia, timidity, lack of attention, should be capable of exact and comparative measurement. At one time he hoped to find such a measure in the reaction time, but experiment showed that it was not correlated with weakness of attention. Yet the general impression gathered from careful study of these patients is that—in spite of superficial appearances to the contrary—their mental processes are distinctly slow. A possible measure of speed or slowness of certain very elementary conscious processes was sought in the phenomenon of visual flicker. An apparatus was constructed, in which,—by the use of an electric motor with rheostat, a clockwork speed-reducer, and an improved rotation-counter,—a disk with alternate sectors of two colors (blue and yellow were used) could be rotated at any desired speed, and the speed measured. The object was to determine the speed of alternation at which the flickering of the two colors ceased and gave way to fusion. It was found, however, that there were several stages in this transition. When the disk rotates very slowly, the sectors are simply seen to move; at a somewhat greater speed, flicker begins, though the two colors are still distinguished; this stage Janet names 'colored flicker.' With greater speed, the colors disappear, giving place to a gray, but the flicker is still apparent—'gray flicker'; and at still greater speed, the flicker ceases. Colored flicker began, in normal subjects, at about 40 impressions per second, and continued to 130–160 impressions, giving place then to the gray flicker, which lasted to 210–250 impressions, the point of complete fusion. The best point to determine in comparative tests seemed to be the point where the colors disappear. Normal subjects were found to vary about as indicated by the above numbers; many hysteric and psychasthenic subjects, on the other hand, got the gray flicker at 80–120 impressions per second, and complete fusion at 100–200 impressions. Subjects that can be raised from the condition of depression, by suggestive procedure, into a fairly normal state, showed a corresponding rise in the number of impressions per second that could be distinguished as flicker. The author's present report is entirely preliminary, but the method is certainly promising. It may be noted that individual differences in the fusion point were remarked by Sherrington in a recent paper on flicker.

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Influence de l'intensité lumineuse sur certaines phases de l'excitation rétinienne. M. BOURDON. *Bulletin de la Société scientifique et médicale de l'Ouest.* 1^er^ trimestre, 1905.

The 'recurrent image' is known to differ with the intensity of the stimulating light, in that the weaker the light the longer is the interval before the recurrent image appears. The whole response of the retina to a brief illumination is known to be very complex, consisting of 6–8 phases, and the present paper studies the effects of different intensities of illumination on these several phases. The stimulus was presented by a dark lantern showing a streak of light 5 mm. wide and 30 cm. long. This streak is of ground glass, illuminated from behind by a gas-light; as the light is placed back of the center of the streak, the brightness of the streak is greatest at the center and diminishes gradually towards each end. The lantern is mounted on a carriage and can be moved across the field of vision, the eye meantime remaining fixed. The appearances corresponding to the bright center of the stimulating streak were found to differ considerably from those corresponding to the less luminous ends. In particular, the primary response to strong stimulation was prompter and more prolonged. More phases appear in response to strong light than in response to weak; and the stronger the light, the more time do these later phases occupy. Other differences can not well be explained without reproducing the figure given in the original.

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